

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) A method for the fracturing of a subterranean hydrocarbon bearing formation to stimulate the production of said hydrocarbons, the method comprising the steps of:

a. injecting a first pressurized fluid into the subterranean formation from a wellbore passing through the formation at a pressure that is sufficient to expand pre-existing small flow conduits to permit introduction of a particulate propping agent into said expanded small flow conduits;

b. introducing a first portion of a first particulate propping agent into the expanded small flow conduits; ~~and~~

c. injecting a second pressurized fluid into the subterranean formation at a pressure that is sufficient to hydraulically fracture the formation; and

d. maintaining the pressure of the second pressurized fracturing fluid in the formation[[:]].

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein a proppant pack is formed in the small flow conduits by the particulate propping agent.

6. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the particulate propping agent is selected from the group consisting of intermediate compressive strength materials, high compressive strength

materials, and combinations thereof.

7. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the size of the particulate propping agent is about 149 microns.

8. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the size of the first particulate propping agent introduced into the small fluid conduits is greater than the interstitial spaces formed by larger propping agents in the fracture openings, whereby backflow of the first particulate propping agent particles into the propped fracture openings is prevented.

9. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the first particulate propping agent is resin coated.

10. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the first particulate propping agent includes an additive selected from the group consisting of flowback prevention additives, fibers, deformable materials, and combinations thereof.

11. (original) In the method of enhancing the flow of hydrocarbon fluids from a subterranean reservoir rock formation in association with a fracturing treatment of the formation, the improvement comprising:

a. in conjunction with fracturing the formation, introducing a first pressurized fluid into the formation at a first pressure that is sufficient to expand pre-existing small flow conduits;

b. introducing into the pressure-expanded small flow conduits a first portion of a particulate propping agent;

c. simultaneously with the fracturing of the formation, or immediately thereafter, introducing a second portion of a particulate propping agent into formed pre-existing small flow conduits and into any new small flow conduits that are expanded by the fracturing of the formation; and

d. reducing the hydraulic pressure on the formation, whereby the small flow conduits are held open by the propping agent particles.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the fracturing treatment is a hydraulic fracturing treatment.

13. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the fracturing treatment is an acid fracturing treatment.

14. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first and second portions of particulate propping agent are the same material.

15. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the size of the first and second portions of particulate propping agent are about 149 microns and smaller.

16. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein a proppant pack is formed in the small flow conduits by the particulate propping agent.

17. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the particulate propping agent is selected from

the group consisting of intermediate compressive strength materials, high compressive strength materials, and combinations thereof.

18. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the first particulate propping agent is resin coated.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the second portion of particulate propping agent is mixed with a hydraulic fracturing fluid composition of guar and VES fluids to form a slurry.

20. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the second portion of particulate propping agent is introduced into the formation simultaneously with the fracturing fluid slurry containing the main fracture proppant materials.